

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Previously Presented) An exhaust gas control apparatus for an internal combustion engine, provided with a NO_x storage/reduction catalyst (7) provided in an exhaust passage and which stores NO_x in exhaust gas by at least one of adsorption and absorption when an air-fuel ratio of in-flowing exhaust gas is lean, and then reduces and purifies the stored NO_x using reduction components in the exhaust gas when the air-fuel ratio of the in-flowing exhaust gas is rich, the apparatus comprising:

an upstream side portion (7a) of a carrier of the NO_x storage/reduction catalyst (7), which is positioned on an upstream side of an exhaust gas flow, and a downstream side portion (7b) of the carrier (7a, 7b) of the NO_x storage/reduction catalyst (7), which is positioned on the downstream side of the exhaust gas flow, wherein the carrier (7a, 7b) carries an oxygen storage component that absorbs oxygen in the exhaust gas when the air-fuel ratio of the exhaust gas is lean and releases the absorbed oxygen when the air-fuel ratio of the exhaust gas is rich, and the amount of the oxygen storage component on the upstream side portion (7a) of the carrier (7a, 7b) is made less than the amount of the oxygen storage component on the downstream side portion (7b) of the carrier (7a, 7b);

characterized in that

a NO_x storage capacity of the upstream side portion (7a) of the carrier (7a, 7b) is made greater than the NO_x storage capacity of the downstream side portion (7b) of the carrier (7a, 7b).

2. (Previously Presented) The exhaust gas control apparatus according to claim 1, characterized in that the upstream side portion (7a) of the carrier (7a, 7b) and the downstream

side portion (7b) of the carrier (7a, 7b) carry at least one of platinum, palladium and rhodium, and the NOx storage capacity of the upstream side portion (7a) of the carrier (7a, 7b) is made greater than the NOx storage capacity of the downstream side portion (7b) of the carrier (7a, 7b) by changing an amount of at least one of platinum, palladium and rhodium carried on the upstream side portion (7a) of the carrier (7a, 7b) and the downstream side portion (7b) of the carrier (7a, 7b).

3. (Currently Amended) The exhaust gas control apparatus according to ~~claim 1 or 2~~, characterized in that the NOx storage capacity of the upstream side portion (7a) of the carrier (7a, 7b) is made greater than the NOx storage capacity of the downstream side portion (7b) of the carrier (7a, 7b) by changing at least one of a carrier cell shape, a carrier cell size, and a carrier cell number on the upstream side portion (7a) of the carrier (7a, 7b) and the downstream side portion (7b) of the carrier (7a, 7b).

4. (Currently Amended) The exhaust gas control apparatus according to ~~one of the claims 1 to 3~~ claim 1, characterized in that the upstream side portion (7a) of the carrier (7a, 7b) and the downstream side portion (7b) of the carrier (7a, 7b) are provided separately.

5. (Currently Amended) The exhaust gas control apparatus according to ~~one of the claims 1 to 3~~ claim 1, characterized in that the upstream side portion (7a) of the carrier (7a, 7b) and the downstream side portion (7b) of the carrier (7a, 7b) are provided integrally.